The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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Thru Payroll Savings

WHOLE NO. 1502 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1945 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 35, NO. 43

AFL POLICIES

Taxes Must Be Reduced

Cincinnati—Declarations issued by the AFL Executive Council on some of the pressing problems facing Congress and the nation follow:

The Executive Council believes immediate action by Congress to reduce taxes is imperative.

Congress must adopt new tax legislation within the next two weeks in order to bring much-needed relief to wage-earners and business in 1946. The time is too short to permit careful and permanent adjustment of the nation's tax policies. For this reason, labor must choose between proposals for temporary action, none of which is basically satisfactory.

As between the tax bill adopted by the House of Representatives and the recommendations made by Secretary of the Treasury Vinson, the Executive Council prefers the Treasury plan. It would abolish the normal three per cent tax on personal income, thus relieving millions of persons in the lowest income brackets of the obligation to pay taxes which they cannot afford. It would repeal the excess profits tax, thereby providing a strong incentive for the launching of new business enterprises and the expansion of existing industries. For temporary purposes, this method is preferable to the House proposals for revising tax rates downward all along the line.

The American Federation of Labor has strongly opposes any attempt to reduce the so-called "luxury" taxes at this time.

From labor's point of view, both plans are faulty because they fail to deal with the important problem of increasing personal exemptions.

The average American citizen is now required to pay taxes on an income base which is far above his actual net income. The personal exemptions were reduced in wartime to a point that did not attempt to reflect the inescapable cost of maintaining a home and a family. Congress would never think of forcing corporations to pay taxes on gross income, before operating costs were deducted. But it has imposed that intolerable condition on the great masses of the American people in the low income groups, who can least afford to carry the extra burden.

Therefore, the American Federation of Labor serves notice on Congress that it will press for prompt revision of personal income tax exemptions. We urge that these exemptions be restored to their pre-war level of $2,000 for a married person or head of a family; $1,000 for single persons and $500 for each dependent.

Labor fully realizes that taxes are bound to remain high for many years to come because of the necessity of paying off the heavy cost of the war.

The Executive Council wishes to emphasize, however, that a low tax rate on a high national income will produce greater revenues than a high rate on a shrunken national income.

When Congress begins consideration of a permanent tax program, it must take into account the fact that lower income tax rates for workers will release a huge flow of purchasing power which is needed to sustain full production and full employment.

In wartime high tax rates served the purpose of putting the brakes on inflation. The time is soon coming when unless those brakes are released, disastrous deflation may result.

One other point needs to be stressed. The cost of Government is still far too high. As Government controls are lifted and wartime Federal agencies are abolished, every effort must be made to run the Government more economically and thereby save the taxpayers' money from being wasted.

How About The Unemployed?

Congress is moving with commendable speed and zeal toward the enactment of legislation which will bring some measure of relief to the nation's taxpayers. But the opposite is true in the attitude of Congress toward those who will not be able to pay taxes next year because they will be unemployed.

Labor can find no excuse or condonation for the decision of the House Ways and Means Committee to ignore the unemployment insurance legislation which, in defiance of urgent and repeated recommendations for immediate action by President Truman and in complete disregard for human needs during reconversion.

The President is reported to have told members of the House Ways and Means Committee that the House action in this "must" legislation by adopting an unsatisfactory bill. But the House committee has lec the President and the nation down even worse, for it has blocked action on any kind of unemployment compensation plan.

As a result, victory is proving a bitter mockery to millions of loyal war workers who helped to win the war by their produci on achievements only to find themselves jobless and without sufficient income to tide them over the reconversion period until new employment opportunities are available.

The President emphasized in his message to Congress the necessity that special legislative provision has been made to aid capital and business and veterans during reconversion. The only ones whose fate has been ignored, the President said, are the war workers themselves, through no fault of their own. So long as that obligation remains unfulfilled, it will constitute a black mark on the record of Congress.

The American Federation of Labor has appealed to the reason, she patriotism and to the friendship of Members of Congress. President Truman has labored valiantly in the same cause. Yet these efforts have thus far proved entirely unavailing.

The Executive Council knows of no way of blasting the log-jam that is blocking passage of this legislation except by direct action. The living conditions of the unemployed in cities throughout the nation are certain to become acute. Instead of waiting until a severe emergency develops, we strongly urge all State Federations of Labor and city central bodies to take steps up public opinion now in favor of immediate action.

We believe that the American people will labor that a maximum of $25 a week for twenty-six weeks a year is not too much temporary compensation for those who lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Let the voice of the people be heard in Congress!

More "Musts" For Congress

Two postwar measures of vital concern to the nation's workers and strongly endorsed by the American Federation of Labor are scheduled for rough sledding in Congress. They are the Full Employment Bill and the amendment to the Wage-Hour Act which would lift the statutory floor under wages to sixty-five cents an hour.

True, the Senate passed a Full Employment Bill. But it was so weakened by amendments, so hamstring by reservations, that its effectiveness in present form is doubtful. Senate Majority Leader Barkley's statement that the appointment of the sponsors of this legislation when he said the bill as passed merely says that a worker has the right to a job—"if he can find one".

Hearings on this legislation in the House are now drawing toward a conclusion and an effort will be made to report out legislation that has some semblance of its original meaning and intent when it comes up for a vote.

The Executive Council pledges the full support of the American Federation of Labor to this move.

It seems indescribable that there should be any serious objections to making full employment a national policy. The purpose of the bill is to assure full employment by encouraging private industry to expand and make the most of its opportunities. It can in no sense be called a spending bill because it authorizes public works only when private investment fails short of the nation's needs.

The pending amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act, setting 65 cents an hour as the new minimum wage in interstate industry, are encountering serious opposition from interests which seek to perpetuate a low-wage economy by means of restrictions on the consumer.

This narrow-minded viewpoint must not be permitted to prevail. The postwar prosperity of America depends upon a high volume of purchasing power among wage-earning people. By keeping wages from falling below $26 a week for forty hours of work, we can assure a great domestic market for the products of American farms and factories. If millions of Americans cannot afford to buy food and clothing, the nation's farming and manufacturing will suffer.

Some enlightened employers are beginning to realize this unchallengeable economic truth. They learned during the war that profits can be more certainly assured by keeping production high than by keeping wages low. They are now showing increasing reluctance to support the policies of unfair competitors who are unwilling to pay decent wages regardless of the interests of the nation.

Labor welcomes support from every source. We are determined to rally the full power of the American Federation of Labor and the backing of public opinion for prompt enactment of this vital legislation.

UTW REPELS CIO RAIDS ON FOUR TEXTILE MILLS

Washington, D. C.—The United Textile Workers of American smashed three attempts by the CIO to raid textile and dye mills in Tennessee, Massachusetts and South Carolina.

CIO invasions at the North American Rayon Corporation and American Enka Corporation in Elizabethton, Tenn., were repelled decisively by a vote of 4 to 1 in favor of the UTW. Over 5,000 employees took part.

The UTW also defeated a CIO raid at the Hoosac Mills in New Bedford, Mass., by a vote of 3 to 1. There are about 1,600 employes in that plant.

The fourth CIO attempt to take over a UTW-AFL mill occurred at the Hartsville Print and Dye Works at Hartsville, S. C., where the UTW won by a good majority.

AFL Demands Substantial Wage Rate Increases; Drafts Proposals to Reduce Industrial Strife

Federation Calls For Strong Foreign Policy To Resist Russia's Attempts To Dominate World

Cincinnati—The American Federation of Labor gave strong support to the firm stand taken by the United States Government against the attempts of Soviet Russia to dominate postwar Europe and Asia.

Denial of democratic self-government to the nations liberated by Allied victory is dangerous to world freedom and world peace, the Executive Council declared.

Failure on the part of the United States to insist upon fair dealing among nations and to make the Four Freedoms a world-wide reality, will render our foreign policy as ineffective as prewar appeasement, the AFL leaders think.

Text of the Executive Council's declaration follows:

"The cause of fighting world peace has suffered severe setbacks since the victories of the United Nations in Europe and in the Pacific.

"Under pressure of selfish power politics, our promises of according to each liberated nation the right of democratic self-government have not been fulfilled.

"The high purposes and objectives which wedded the United Nations together in common crusade against Nazism and Fascism appear to have been forgotten.

"This is a highly dangerous situation—one which calls for honest appraisal of the facts and courageous decisions to guarantee the future safety of the world.

"On one point the United Nations are still firmly agreed—that the power of Germany and Japan to wage war must and shall be forever destroyed. Some dissension has arisen on the methods by which this goal shall be accomplished. But the big issue, which has split the United Nations wide apart, is how to set up postwar order and stability in Europe and Asia. This issue involves serious political, economic and territorial factors.

"The current Foreign Ministers Conference in London which attempted to make international settlements ended in failure.

"The frank public reports made by Secretary of State Byrnes and by British Foreign Minister Bevin leave no room for doubt that the noncooperative attitude of Soviet Russia was largely responsible for the stalemate.

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"If Russia is going to persist in a lone-wolf foreign policy, nothing will be gained by dodging the facts or pretending they do not exist. We cannot be a party to any nation at the cost of principles. Failure on our part to adopt a firm policy in defense of our convictions will only be interpreted as a sign of weakness and inevitably will result in pressure for further concessions.

"The American Federation of Labor has no hesitation in declaring that Soviet Russia's policy which stands firm and unyielding in defense of principle and which seeks to make the Four Freedoms a worldwide reality.

Give Palestine To Jews AFL Urges British Gov't

Cincinnati—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor urgently appealed to the Labor Government of Great Britain to grant at once to Jewish refugees oppressed Jews of Europe, "whose plight has not received proper consideration since victory," the Council said:

"We know that our friends in Great Britain do not wish to prolong or repeat the tragic record of previous British Governments on this issue.

"At the close of the first World War, Great Britain solemnly promised to establish Palestine as the Jewish national homeland. If that promise had been carried out within a reasonable time, untold suffering could have been avoided and many thousands of Jewish lives could have been spared.

"Today the Jewish victims of Hitler's terrible oppressions, those who survived the mass slaughter which the Nazis perpetrated, are still homeless and hopeless. Shocking as it may seem, most of them are still living in concentration camps and have not regained their citizenship, their property or their rights.

"After the reign of terror through which they have passed, a large number of these survivors will never again feel safe or secure in the lands which ostracized them. They seek a new home, a haven and a refuge from tyranny, an atmosphere of peace and encouragement.

"The great accomplishments made by the Jews who were permitted in the past to emigrate to Palestine in the development of that country give convincing evidence of a promising future for that land under Jewish dominion.

"The American Federation of Labor, which has always supported the cause of Jewish freedom, urges upon the Labor Government of Great Britain now in the name of friendship and justice to redeem its pledge to the Jews.

"We urge that President Truman's recommendation for immediate increase of Jewish immigration quotas in Palestine be complied with and that Jewish sovereignty in Palestine be granted as soon as conditions justify and permit such action in keeping with democratic principles."

National Casket Company Employes Win Important Gains

Philadelphia.—Important gains for employes of the National Casket Co. have been won as the result of the first joint contract negotiations conducted by the Upholsterers' International Union (AFL) for Local 412, East Cambridge, Mass.; Local 412, Baltimore, Md., and Local 1928, Asheville, N. C.

In the conferences extending over more than two months, the local unions were represented by International President Sal B. Hoffmann, International Vice President William J. Heffernan, International Vice President Howard Litchfield, business representative of Local 1928 Fred Thomas, business representative of Local 412, and Organization Director Arthur McDowell. H. T. Mouldinolig, company president, represented management.

Among improvements in the contracts for the three locals are:

Vacation pay was upped from 40 and 80 hours to 48 and 96 hours, provided the plants have worked at least six months during the year on a 46-hour week; overtime pay was set at double time for Sunday and 2½ times for work on holidays; Saturday work was established as overtime regardless of the number of hours worked during the week as a whole; when overtime work extends to 7 p.m. or Saturday work beyond 1 p.m., 75-cent supper or lunch money will be paid; two paid 15-minute rest periods daily are established on an experimental basis in the East Cambridge and Baltimore plants (Asheville plant is on an hourly pay basis); the hiring of minors was upped from 16 to 18; same two plants, bringing entry pay for men to 65 cents and for women to 55 cents; a 55-cent minimum, with a 5-cent hourly raise to all workers was gained for the Asheville plant, bringing general hourly raises in the plant during the year to 11 cents.

MORE SOCIAL SECURITY ASKED BY ALTMEYER

Chicago—More liberal social security must be provided for the workers of America, if "free enterprise" is to survive. That warning was sounded by Chairman A. J. Altmeyer of the Social Security Board in an address here to a large audience of business men at a meeting of the Chicago Association of Commerce.

Altmeyer called for higher unemployment insurance, sickness and disability benefits, and a form of old-age annuities to millions not now covered, and other improvements in the present Social Security Act.

Altmeyer riddled propaganda that the board favors "socialized medicine." He program of "health insurance," he said, provides merely for spreading the cost of medical care through small payroll contributions by employers and employes.

DUBINSKY IS ELECTED AFL VICE PRESIDENT

Cincinnati.—David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, was elected unanimously as thirteenth Vice President of the American Federation of Labor by the Executive Council at its meeting here.

Mr. Dubinsky, who served on the Executive Council from 1934 to 1936, will fill the seat left vacant by the death of Edward Flore, late president of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers.

Notified of his election, Mr. Dubinsky came here from New York to take part immediately in the policy-making duties of the council. As his first assignment, he was named to serve as one of the AFL delegates to the forthcoming Labor - Industry Conference in Washington.

FAST ACTION URGED ON HOUSING BILL

Cincinnati.—Pointing out that the only tangible proposal for the creation of millions of new jobs now before Congress is the Wagner Postwar Housing Bill, the AFL Executive Council demanded its prompt enactment.

The bill sets up a comprehensive national housing policy, and is intended to encourage a construction drive which will result in the building of 1,500,000 new homes each year during the postwar period.

Text of the executive council's statement follows:

"Adoption of postwar housing legislation advocated by the American Federation of Labor is a matter of utmost national urgency and can no longer be deferred.

"The executive council appeals to Congress to consider immediately and enact promptly a comprehensive national housing policy together with a set of unified long-range programs essential to carry out such a policy.

"Homeless American families will soon be a reality in thousands of communities while dangerous overcrowding will become widespread unless Congress recognizes the nation's need and acts to meet it.

"Over 1,400,000 married veterans are already in immediate need of homes. Millions of families returning veterans are expected to establish new homes within the next year but will find no place to set up new households. America's housing need was extremely acute before the war. During the war years 27,000,000 persons took part in the vast shifts of population and labor that were made necessary by the war. As a result of this migration, the already critical need for more housing has become greatly intensified. This pressing and continually growing need cannot be met overnight. Only long-range planning designed to achieve clearly and courageously stated housing objectives for the entire nation will suffice to assure better homes and better living conditions for all Americans in cities and on the farms.

"The American Federation of Labor has always advocated the adoption of a comprehensive housing bill which will assure each community, through its own local initiative and with the fullest measure of local responsibility, to reach the postwar housing objectives as rapidly as the great wartime and postwar needs of war America will make possible. The most essential principle on which low incomes, America's postwar housing program and the normal housing market which can only be fully reached through a comprehensive housing program. The failure to assure provision of new homes to low-income families as well as to continue to meet the housing needs of families of moderate income can only spell disaster and unemployment.

Postwar housing is the only legislation now pending before Congress which would provide a tangible source of mass employment opportunities and lay a broad and firm basis for postwar redevelopment and reconstruction of the entire nation."

AFL OFFICIALS DEPART FOR EUROPEAN SURVEY

Washington, D. C.—Irving Brown, assistant to the AFL members on the National War Labor Board, left by plane for an official visit to Norway, Sweden and Denmark at the invitation of the trade union movements of those countries.

Accompanying him on the trip will be Charles S. Zimmerman, vice president of the International Ladies Garment Workers, who is representing the Jewish Labor Committee on a survey of postwar European conditions. Mr. Zimmerman will also visit England and France, besides the Scandinavian countries.

Executive Council Charges Wartime Promises To Labor Were Not Kept and Insists On Action Now.

Cincinnati—In the interest of justice and national prosperity, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor demanded substantial wage increases for the nation's workers.

AFL President William Green declared the federation will give its full support to the efforts of all affiliated unions to obtain higher wage rates.

He expressed the conviction that industry is able to afford to pay wage boosts of from 20 to 30 percent in hourly rates without materially increasing prices.

Other news highlights developing from the quarterly meeting of the Executive Council included:

1. The council urged immediate reduction in income taxes and emphasized that personal exemptions should be raised to pre-war levels.

2. It expressed strong support of a firm American foreign policy which would assure lasting world peace by according liberated nations the right to freedom, democracy and independence.

3. The AFL leaders drafted proposals to be submitted to the forthcoming labor-industry conference in Washington for the establishment and maintenance of peaceful and stable industrial relations and the prevention of strikes.

4. Unanimous endorsement was given to the pending postwar housing bill which would encourage a nation-wide housing construction drive and create millions of new jobs.

5. Congress was also asked in no uncertain terms to enact without delay the Kilgore Unemployment Compensation Bill, the Full Employment Bill and amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act lifting the minimum wage floor to 65 cents an hour immediately.

In discussing wage policy, the Executive Council declared that the wartime wage freeze had wiped out parity between static wage rates and boomtime living costs, resulting at the end of the war in a 30 percent disadvantage to labor so far as the relation between hourly rates of pay and the cost of living were concerned.

The council added: When we entered this war to rid the world of political and economic despots we were assured that nobody would be allowed to profit unduly from the war—that there would be no new crop of war millionaires. But the record of the profits made during the war by industry and business as a whole make that promise as hollow as the promise made to labor that its economic position would not be allowed to deteriorate because of its willingness to forego the use of the strike while our country was at war.

The current demands for wage increases are being opposed by these same profit-makers on the grounds that they are interfering with reconversion; that they will increase prices and start an inflationary spiral. The charge comes with singular impropriateness from the very interests who profited most during the war and whose profits have already resulted in prices which have risen from the workers the meager wage increases they received during the war.

"Instead of interfering with reconversion, labor's demand for wage increases will hasten their early realization—the first possible assurance of sound and lasting prosperity in the post-war period. Purchasing power is an absolute essential to our mass production economy. We proved during the war that we have the resources, the industry and the manpower to produce enough to raise living standards above levels heretofore believed possible. The problem today is to distribute purchasing power so that all the people may receive the benefits of our productive genius. The key to that problem is higher wages.

"The degree of prosperity which we shall have in this country following this war depends almost wholly upon the degree of success which labor achieves in its demands for higher wages.

"Mr. Green told newsmen that the AFL is not stipulating any national percentage of increase in wages but will leave that to its affiliated unions which are in the best position to know what conditions are in their own trade.

"But the American Federation of Labor will support its affiliated national and international unions to the fullest extent in their efforts to secure substantial wage rate increases," Mr. Green said.

"Until we are shown otherwise by facts, we believe the wage increases can be paid out of profits without need for higher prices."

Mr. Green said he believed affiliated unions could obtain their demands in most cases by collective bargaining and other peaceful procedures.

"We are not in favor of promoting strikes," he declared.

AFL Delegates Named For Labor-Industry Parley

Cincinnati—Following are the delegates and alternates named to represent the American Federation of Labor at the Labor-Industry Conference called by President Truman to meet in Washington Nov. 10:

William Green, AFL President.

George Meany, AFL Secretary-Treasurer.

Harry C. Bates, Bricklayers, Masons & Plasterers International Union of America.

Daniel J. Tobin, President International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America.

William L. Hutcheson, President United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America.

David Dubinsky, President International Ladies' Garment Workers Union.

George Harrison, President Brotherhood of Railway Clerks.

Matthew Woll, Vice-President American Federation of Labor.

Charles J. MacGowan, President International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders and Helpers of America.

A. L. Spradling, Assistant President Amalgamated Association of Street & Electric Railway Employes of America.

Martin Durkin, President United Association of Plumbers and Steam Fitters of the United States and Canada.

Herman Winter, President Bakery and Confectionery Workers' International Union of America.

Hal C. Brown, President International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Patrick E. Gorman, Secretary-Treasurer Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America.

James M. Duffy, President National Brotherhood of Operative Potters.

Elmer E. Milliman, President Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes.

AFL MEMBERSHIP TOPS ALL PREVIOUS MARKS

Cincinnati.—The average membership of the American Federation of Labor during the fiscal year ended Aug. 31 reached the all-time high of 6,936,000, Secretary-Treasurer George Meany reported to the Executive Council.

President William Green confirmed newspaper reports that the International Association of Machinists had failed to pay per capita tax to the Federation for some months because of a dispute on jurisdictional questions. Mr. Green said he expected the future status and policy of the Machinists would be decided by the delegates at the forthcoming convention of the union to be held in New York City.

SAY, LISTEN!

For the rest of this year, the AFL presents each Saturday evening at 6:45 P.M., EWT, over the nation-wide network of the American Broadcasting Company a radio news-magazine, featuring the latest news at home and abroad and special reports by AFL experts who interpret these bright, newsy broadcasts! Listen every Saturday night!